

FORT LEE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

October 27, 2020

Present: J. Silver, H. Joh, G. Makroulakis, D. Conway, H. Liapes, S. Tropea, D. Sugarman

Absent: J. Nitti

Present: J. Mariniello, Jr., Esq., M. Jovishoff, Phillips, Preiss, Grygiel, B.Intindola, Neglia Eng.

Chairman Sugarman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING: The Chairman states: Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner: All members of this Body have been advised in writing at least 48 hours prior to this meeting of the time, place, and proposed Agenda of this meeting. A written notice of the time, place, and proposed Agenda was posted on the bulletin board of Municipal Building, 309 Main Street, Fort Lee, New Jersey. On the same date, a copy of said written notice was mailed to the Record, Jersey Journal, Time Warner Cable and Fort Lee Online. A copy was filed with the Borough Clerk and, on the same date, copies were mailed to all persons who have requested copies of such notices and have prepaid the fee fixed for the year 2020.

The meeting was held remotely, by means of communication equipment. The foregoing Electronic Public Meeting is recommended due to the current situation involving COVID-19 Virus and directives of State and County governments. The meeting was conducted using Zoom operating system.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Silver and passed on a vote of 7-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes, Tropea and Sugarman to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 13, 2020.

Memorializations

Docket #3-20, Redco Construction Corporation, 2038 Hoefley's Lane, Block 4951, Lot 5, Two Unit Dwelling

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Joh and approved on a vote of 6-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to construct a Two- Unit Dwelling.

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Amend Minutes from the August 11, 2020 Meeting to state that Chairman Sugarman announced signage is not part of the #11-20 application. Signage was voted on separately. There were two Resolutions, one for Preliminary approval without signage and one for signage.

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Silver and approved on a vote of 6-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes and Sugarman to amend the Minutes from the August 11, 2020 Board of Adjustment Meeting.

Docket #11-20, 2100 North Central Road FL, LLC, 2100 North Central Road & 2143 Hudson Terrace, Block 6155, Lots 1 & 2, Amended Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Renovation and Conversion of Existing Office Building and Hotel to a Planned Development Group Apartment Building of 310 Residential Units

It was moved by Mr. Makroulakis, seconded by Mr. Liapes and approved on a vote of 6-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to do a Renovation and Conversion of an Existing Office Building and Hotel to a Planned Group Apartment Building.

Docket #11-20, 2100 North Central Road FL, LLC, 2100 North Central Road & 2143 Hudson Terrace, Block 6155, Lots 1 & 2, Signage approval

It was moved by Mr. Makroulakis, seconded by Mr. Conway and approved on a vote of 6-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes and Sugarman to grant the applicant Signage approval.

Docket #13-20, Redco Construction Corporation, 216-218 Columbia Avenue, Block 553, Lot 2, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Four Unit Development.

Chairman Sugarman stated this Resolution is carried to the meeting of November 10, 2020.

Docket #29-20, 423 Grandview, LLC, 423 Grandview Place, Block 6652, Lot 19, Two Unit Dwelling

It was moved by Mr. Makroulakis, seconded by Mr. Liapes and approved on a vote of 6-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to construct a Two- Unit Dwelling.

Acceptance/Completeness

Docket #31-20, 225 Slocum, LLC, 225 Slocum Way, Block 3956, Lot 30, Two Unit Dwelling

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Makroulakis and passed on a vote of 7-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes, Tropea and Sugarman to deem the application complete. Mr. Macri will call the Board office for a hearing date.

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Public Hearing

Docket #27-20, David Smithers & Donna Rossi, 1344 Selden Place, Block 2252, Lot 3, Single Family Home – Deck Addition

Saverio Cereste stated this is a 5,000 square foot lot in the R2 zone. The applicant proposes to remove the existing patio, staircase, and landing at the rear of the one-family dwelling and to construct a new, raised deck. One variance for minimum rear yard setback is required. 25 feet is required, 11 feet is proposed.

Exhibit A1-Site and Architectural Plan dated August 11, 2020, revised September 25, 2020, 4 sheets.

Tina Vaska, Tina Vaska Architects, 33 North Shore Road, Denville was sworn in and her credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Ms. Vaska stated Sheet A4 shows a key map. It's in the R2 zone of Selden Place.

Sheet A1-survey-This is a level lot with a two-story frame structure, built in 2017. The rear yard setback is 20 feet. Existing is a patio. They would like a deck to enhance the applicant's indoor/outdoor living. There are evergreens that form a hedge. The photo shows the current conditions. We needed to work with the existing geometry. This is a modest deck with stairs to the rear yard.

Sheet A2 shows the 14 x 16 deck, the left side elevation. This is 4 feet off the ground. Sheet A4 shows the aerial photo, the red dot is over the property. The street view is on the left side. Hiram's Hot Dogs is in the rear.

Michael Jovishoff's review letter dated October 21, 2020 was reviewed.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Jovishoff stated the rendering shows fencing around the HVAC units and it looks solid under the deck.

Ms. Vaska stated it has not been determined what will be under the deck.

Mr. Jovishoff stated I have a concern about that.

Mr. Cereste stated we can stipulate that this will be left open.

Mr. Jovishoff stated I have no issue with fencing around the HVAC.

Mr. Smithers stated the HVAC enclosure will be in the plans.

Mr. Jovishoff asked if there will be any lighting installed.

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Ms. Vaska stated there will be a sconce on either side of the patio door and on the risers.

Mr. Jovishoff asked if the patio underneath the proposed deck will be removed.

Ms. Vaska stated we would like to maintain some of it.

Mr. Jovishoff stated no problem. The screening will be the arborvitae.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board, the public.

Mr. Cereste made his closing statement.

It was moved by Mr. Silver, seconded by Mr. Liapes and passed on a vote of 7-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, Liapes, Tropea and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to construct a deck addition to a single-family home.

Docket #26-20, 1355 15th Street, FLNJ, LLC, 1355 Fifteenth Street, Block 2251, Lot 3, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – 14 Story, 150 Unit Residential Building

Danielle Federico stated the applicant proposes a 12 story, 137 unit residential building. The previous application was withdrawn for a 14 story, 150 unit building. The property is in the R10 zone. This use is permitted. We are requesting a D5 variance for minimum lot per family. We will come back to the Board for signage approval.

Matthew Clark, MCB Engineering Associates, 11 Furlow Street, Totowa was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Clark stated he prepared the site plan. The survey on the screen was prepared by Mark Martins. On the property exists a two-story office building. A two-level parking structure adjoins the building on the left side of the property, with a covered garage, which is below grade on the front of the property but on grade at the rear lot line.

The site plan was submitted as part of the application. The variance that is to be taken away is the parking lot screening. There are a total of 9 variances. A 12-story building is proposed. There is a parking deck proposed. Three driveways are proposed, two on Fifteenth Street and one out the back onto Fourteenth Street. There are 131 parking spaces required, 195 spaces proposed. There is a loading area. Trash will be inside the building.

Grading and Utility Plan-The property slopes from Fifteenth Street to Fourteenth Street. There will be a reduction in the amount of stormwater. The sanitary water and gas will come off of Fifteenth Street.

Lighting and Landscaping Plan-Three poles will be mounted to the deck. Landscaping along each side line will be arborvitae. The applicant proposes to remove all six existing trees along the front of the property. A total of 11 trees will be planted as replacement, including two

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Eastern Redbud trees, three Flowering Dogwood trees and three Flowering Dogwood trees located along the front property line. In addition, two Flowering Dogwood trees are proposed in the curbed island adjoining the driveways, and two groups each containing one Eastern Redbud tree and one Flowering Dogwood tree are proposed in the planter boxes adjoining the entrance. Thirty two Burning Bush plantings are proposed along the front lot line surrounding the trees. In addition, a row of Emerald Green Arborvitae will be extending along both side lot lines from the front to the rear lot lines.

A landscaped portion of the building roof, green roof area, is shown on the 12th floor and along the terrace perimeter. The materials are not indicated.

The Engineer and Planner's reports will be complied with. The landscaping and lighting comments will be complied with.

The temporary construction site plan sheet shows the construction trailer and material storage.

Site detail plan shows the curbs and sidewalks.

The October 19, 2020 report from Mr. Jovishoff, page 6, the site plan waivers, the driveway width is actually 20 feet to Fourteenth Street. The depressed curb waivers are needed.

The transformer screening will be added.

Neglia letter, handicap access, there are stalls at the front and some on the deck. Per the handicap code, we tried to get the stalls as close to the entrance as possible.

Page 5-4:12 geotechnical analysis-this was submitted. This is a general look at the materials. Blasting is not anticipated but some rock hammering may be required.

4:14-this application will require a TWA application.

Page 6-lighting and landscaping-we will comply and make revisions as needed.

Chairman Quinn asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Jovishoff asked if the transformer can be moved from the front.

Mr. Clark stated we can look into moving the transformer and work with the Architect and PSE&G.

Brian Intindola asked if you can get from Fifteenth Street to Fourteenth Street.

Mark Vergona, Vergona & Vergona Architects, 125 River Rd. Suite 201, Edgewater was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Exhibit A1-colored version of the Architectural Plan

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Aerial exhibit 1 of 1-The site is the green line in the middle of the drawing. Across the street is residential, 15 story high-rise, to the South is a townhouse, also to the South is the Carriage House and the Charlton. To the North is a series of two-family homes and some one and two family homes. Along Sixteenth Street there's a commercial area. This building is appropriate for this area. The site is a T shape and it slopes from front to back.

The front is at grade level. The topography had an impact on how we designed the lower part of the building. The lobby is at the street level. The North elevation of the building was shown. The South elevation was shown. This is similar to the garage that is currently there. The garage is exposed in the rear. We tried to get as much of a setback in the front as we could. There are no buildings in the rear for 500 feet. We tried to maintain some setbacks. The parking touches the property lines on almost all sides. The tower is set back 37 ½ feet. The exterior was subdivided into smaller units, by creating breaks in the façade. The back of the building is dark and the front is lighter with glass. The building is a combination of brick and metal panels, the top appears recessed. The front of the building is lower in the front than in the rear. The garage is shown as a simple base. There are balconies in the rear and french balconies in the front. The landscaping has been increased. There is a low wall in the front to help hide the parking area. There is a loading area on the North side of the building.

There are two means of egress out of the garage. There are 11 studios, 84 one bedroom and 42 two bedroom units.

The building will be constructed of concrete. It will be fully sprinklered. The top floor has a pool, terrace, community room, gym and green roof area. HVAC will be on the roof behind the elevator tower. We can screen the HVAC if needed.

Mr. Jovishoff's report and the Neglia report were reviewed.

Danielle Federico stated Item 12 in Mr. Jovishoff's report regarding Affordable Housing, the applicant will comply with this as a condition of approval.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Jovishoff stated Affordable Unit requirements need to be seen on the plan. Any changes in the plan would require the applicant return to the Board.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Elena Dmitrieva, 551 Fourteenth Street, Palisades Park asked if Fourteenth Street will remain open.

Danielle Federico stated there will be no blasting.

Matt Clark stated the soil report is anticipating there will be no blasting. Nothing on Fourteenth Street will be changed.

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Susan C. stated the letter I received seems like they are seeking a variance for increased lot coverage. Where is the extra lot coverage.

Mr. Vergona stated the tower and garage are two different sizes. The tower footprint is smaller.

Frank Goris, 1353 Fifteenth Street stated the parking garage to the rear is exposed. They can look directly into my property. Will this be above my property.

Mr. Vergona stated the garage is on grade and will be hidden by landscaping. The rear is the same height as the one that is there now.

Marvin Lee, 551B Fourteenth Street, Palisades Park asked is the ramp to the garage necessary.

Mr. Vergona stated we feel it is necessary for the security and safety of the building.

Louis Luglio, Traffic Engineer, 30 Montgomery Street, Jersey City was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Luglio stated he prepared the traffic report dated September 11, 2020. The existing structure is a 40,000 square foot office building. The proposed use is 137 residential units. There is a reduction in the amount of vehicles during the AM and PM peak hours. 64 vehicles in the AM peak hour for the general office and 48 vehicles in the PM peak hour for the general office. For the 137 residential units there are 51 vehicles in the AM peak hour and 55 vehicles in the PM peak hour. We did not take transit usage into account. The AM and PM counts would be reduced if applying this.

The high-rise parking ratio might be a little low, and a townhouse more conservative. There are 131 required parking spaces required and 195 spaces proposed. The RSIS includes guest parking within the ratio. The turning templates can be provided. A trash vehicle can enter and exit the site. There's not a lot of traffic volume on Fourteenth and Fifteenth Street. This proposed building of 137 units is a low generator of traffic volume. There would be no impact associated with this.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Jovishoff stated the visitor parking is not included in the requirement. Where is the visitor parking.

Mr. Luglio stated 137 spaces is including guest parking. It would be assigned throughout the structure as you come in. I'm not concerned about having a shortage of guest parking.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Lisa Phillips, Planner, 14 Rt. 4W, River Edge was sworn in and her credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

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Ms. Phillips stated that we have unique characteristics. We have two entrances/exits. The proposal is for 137 units, 12 stories, 195 parking spaces. The zoning ordinance and master plan are consistent. We are in the R10 zone which has a lot of mixed uses and other high-rise buildings. The D variance is for density. Regarding the school children, we anticipate about 12 children in total. None of the other high-rise units comply with the density. We require nine C variances for maximum lot coverage, building height, front yard setback and improved lot coverage. There is no substantial impact to the public good.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Jeff Silver asked what is the total number of students.

Ms. Phillips stated 12 for the entire project.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

It was moved by Mr. Conway, seconded by Mr. Sugarman and denied on a vote of 6-0 by members Silver, Joh, Makroulakis, Conway, and Liapes and Tropea. Chairman Sugarman abstained from the vote.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Makroulakis, seconded by Mr. Conway to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Garofalo

Linda Garofalo
Recording Secretary

